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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5317
RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHOVQHS/COMSEVENTHFLT IMMEDIATE
INFO RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 2289
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0313
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHRO/USMISSION UN ROME IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002070

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

BANGKOK FOR USAID /OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR A. DWYER
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA R. THAYER
USAID W/ FOR ANE/AA AND DCHA/FPP
GENEVA FOR N. KYLOH
USUN FOR OFDA REP
BRUSSELS FOR P. BROWN
ROME FOR USAID/OHA H. SPANOS
SECDEF FOR SOLIC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR J3/J4/J5
PACOM FOR J3/J4/J5
NSC FOR P. MARCHAM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID SOCI PREL KPAO SENV EAGR RP

SUBJECT: STILL IN SHOCK FROM TROPICAL STORM ONDOY MANILA BRACES FOR
NEW TYPHOONS

REFTELS: A) Manila 2056 B) Manila 2049 C) Manila 2046

¶1. (U) Casualties from tropical storm Ondoy (international name Ketsana) reached 246 dead, and 42 missing as of Wednesday, September 130. While major thoroughfares are now passable and the Manila international airport has reopened, all Manila public schools and the primary hospital in hard hit nearby Rizal province remain closed. The Philippines' National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reports 2.3 million persons affected by flooding, nearly 400,000 staying in 561 evacuation centers and roughly 350,000 additional displaced persons staying with private host families. The NDCC estimates damages to date at almost 4.8 billion pesos (\$100 million).

U.S. Assistance

¶2. (SBU) Under the Ambassador's authority, USAID'S Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has released \$100,000 to the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC). An OFDA humanitarian supplies flight (Aleutian -70) is tentatively scheduled to arrive on Friday, October 2, with non-food relief items (water containers, hygiene kits and tarpaulins). These items (value estimated at about \$390,000) will be sufficient to assist 20,000 people. Also, two USAID/OFDA regional advisors are in Manila to assist with coordination among the Government of the Philippines, NGOs, UN agencies, and the US military. They will also assess the need for additional resources. We have directed various USAID bilateral health programs to support local government health officials in assessing and addressing disaster-related health care needs. Ambassador and USAID personnel visited a 4,000-person evacuation center to assist Red Cross personnel in distributing relief supplies.

U.S., International Firms Help Out

¶3. (SBU) U.S. and international firms were both victims of the typhoon - e.g., over 10 percent of Ford Philippines' employees suffered heavy flood damage - as well as important relief donors. Ford, IBM, General Electric, Falcon Waterfree, McDonald's and Kraft were among the firms that provided relief funds or supplies to both their employees and disaster relief organizations. The Amcham Foundation of the Philippines has organized a relief drive, and DHL Express has agreed to assist the NDCC in the distribution of relief supplies.

Embassy Chancery at Full Power

¶4. (SBU) The entire Embassy compound has been reconnected to the commercial power grid, and laboratory tests to confirm the safety of drinking water from the repaired water treatment plant are due today. All offices have been cleaned and disinfected, and telephone, non-classified and classified communications systems have been restored. The U.S. Embassy Filipino Employees Association (USEFEA), supported by Embassy Management, is raising funds to assist flood-affected locally employed staff.

¶5. (SBU) The Consular Section has received inquiries on behalf of 69 American citizens believed to be stranded in various flood-stricken areas. Staff has located and confirmed the well-being of 44 of these individuals, while 25 Americans remain unaccounted for. Staff has provided information on the missing Americans to the relevant local authorities and continues to follow up with them for information. American Citizens Services is checking casualty lists

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received from NDCC against U.S. passport records, but the lists do not contain enough information to conclusively identify American citizens.

¶6. (U) Post will hold an Emergency Action Committee meeting October 1 to prepare for three storms possibly heading toward the Manila area. A warden message will also be sent out.

Media Reports U.S. Efforts

¶7. (U) Major national and local print and electronic media prominently reported USG rescue and relief assistance. The broadly circulated national daily Manila Bulletin featured U.S. military rescue operations on the front page of its September 28 issue, while numerous other publications, TV and radio stations described the deployment of U.S. troops, helicopters, rubber boats and heavy equipment in rescue and relief operations. During an appearance on the Philippines' top TV news magazine program, Unang Hirit, the Ambassador described USG relief efforts and the USG's desire to work together with the Philippines to improve disaster preparedness.

Next Steps

¶8. (SBU) U.S. Department of Defense equipment and personnel participating in Talon Vision/PHIBLEX (Philippines Bilateral Exercise) are augmenting ongoing Philippine relief efforts. The U.S. Marine Corps's trucks, engineer equipment and a 26-person medical team will provide a major boost to the city's struggling relief efforts.

Comment

¶9. (SBU) U.S. private sector and USG relief efforts will greatly add to the Philippine government's energetic but insufficient efforts to manage this large-scale disaster. With Typhoon Pepeng (International Name Parma) expected in Philippine territory the afternoon of September 30, and a southwest monsoon expected to dump

additional rain on Manila later this week, the arrival of U.S. relief supplies is well-timed.

Kenney